

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
HA-05 IO-13 OMB-01 EB-08 TRSE-00 ACDA-12 /107 W  
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R 041804Z APR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6209  
INFO /AMEMBASSY CARACAS 258  
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA  
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE  
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR  
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 1551

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, SHUM, PFOR, NU  
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT SOMOZA: APRIL 3

SUMMARY: AMB WAS CALLED TO MEET WITH PRES SOMOZA APRIL 3 ONLY A FEW HOURS FOLLOWING LATTER'S RETURN TO NICARAGUA. SOMOZA COMPLAINED ABOUT U.S.-VENEZUELAN DISCUSSIONS RE NICARAGUA. THE AMB RAISED THE CHARITON CASE (SEPTTEL). THE NEED FOR FURTHER PROGRESS ON INITIATIVES TO RESTORE CLIMATE FOR DIALOGUE WAS ALSO DISCUSSED. END SUMMARY.

1. AMB MET WITH SOMOZA FOR TWO HOURS AND FOUND HIM LOOKING MORE RESTED BUT STILL NOT AS STRONG AS IN MEETINGS IN FEBRUARY AND EARLY MARCH. SOMOZA STATED HE WAS EXTREMELY UPSET TO HAVE LEARNED FROM STATEMENTS MADE BY PRESIDENT CARTER AND BRZEZINSKI ON THEIR TRIP TO CARACAS THAT THERE HAS BEEN ONGOING CONTACTS FOR SEVERAL MONTHS BETWEEN THE TWO PRESIDENTS REGARDING NICARAGUA AND HE HAD NEVER BEEN INFORMED. HE SAID HE FELT THAT INFORMATION SHOULD HAVE BEEN PASSED TO HIM AS THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN THE PROPER WAY TO TREAT A FRIENDLY NATION.

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2. AMB REPLIED THAT THEY HAD DISCUSSED ON TWO OCCASIONS THE VENEZUELAN INITIATIVE IN THE OAS AND THE CONFERENCE OF THE COMMANDERS OF THE AMERICAN ARMIES. HE ALSO REFERRED TO PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENT THAT WE DID NOT FAVOR INTERVENTION BUT THAT WE DID FAVOR THE VISIT OF THE IAHRG OR OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANIZATION TO FIND OUT THE FACTS IN NICARAGUA. AMB, HOWEVER, AGREED TO INFORM WASHINGTON OF SOMOZA'S DISPLEASURE.

3. AMB NEXT RAISED THE CHARITON CASE (SEPTTEL).

4. AMB REFERRED TO CONTACTS HE HAD RECENTLY HAD WITH IMPORTANT OPPOSITION BUSINESS AND POLITICAL LEADERS AND DESCRIBED HIS FINDING THAT THEY APPEAR TO HAVE A REAL DESIRE FOR POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION. HOWEVER, THESE PEOPLE REMAIN LEERY OF TAKING ANY PUBLIC STEPS IN THAT DIRECTION BECAUSE OF SOMOZA'S POWER AND HIS PAST UNDEMOCRATIC PRACTICES. SOMOZA PROTESTED HE WAS BEING JUDGED ON THE BASIS OF HIS PAST RECORD AND NOT ON THE INITIATIVES HE HAS OFFERED. AMB REPLIED THAT SOMOZA'S STATEMENTS WERE ENCOURAGING BUT THE OPPOSITION SAW THE NEED FOR FURTHER TANGIBLE ACTIONS.

5. AMB REFERRED TO TWO DEMANDS PUBLICLY RAISED BY THE OPPOSITION IN THE PRESS WHICH HE SUGGESTED SOMOZA MIGHT CONTEMPLATE: CHANGING THE COMPOSITION OF THE ELECTORAL TRIBUNAL SO THAT THE RULING PARTY WOULD NO LONGER HAVE MAJORITY CONTROL IN COUNTING THE VOTES; AND THAT SOMOZA PERMANENTLY RESIGN NOW FROM THE POSITION OF CHIEF DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL GUARD LEAVING GENERAL JOSE R. SOMOZA OR PREFERABLY SOME OTHER GENERAL IN CHARGE OF THE GN.

6. SOMOZA SAID THAT NOBODY REALIZED HOW HARD IT HAD BEEN FOR HIM TO SAY HE WOULD BE STEPPING DOWN IN 1981 WHEN HIS GOVERNMENT WAS ON THE DEFENSIVE. AMB SAID HIS POLITICAL COURAGE HAD BEEN NOTED BY THE U.S. BUT THAT HE SHOULD CONTINUE TO GIVE INDICATIONS OF HIS READINESS FOR A DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION TO DEFLATE THE CRISIS. SOMOZA  
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SAID HE WOULD HAVE TO CONSULT WITH HIS "CLAN", BUT SAID HE FELT THE ISSUES THE AMB HAD RAISED SHOULD BE THE END RESULT OF THE DIALOGUE PROCESS NOT UNILATERAL.

7. SOMOZA SAID HE HAD BEEN GIVING FURTHER THOUGHT TO THE ELECTORAL PROCESS AND TO LAWS WHICH MIGHT BE ADOPTED TO INSTITUTIONALIZE THE GN. HE SAID HE THOUGHT THE CONGRESS MIGHT BE GIVEN POWER TO APPOINT THE HEAD OF THE GN BUT THAT IT REQUIRED FURTHER STUDY.

8. SOMOZA RETURNED TO THE THEME THAT HIS PROBLEM WITH THE OPPOSITION WAS A RESULT OF THEIR BEING FUELED BY THE U.S. HE SAID HE FELT CARTER'S STATEMENT IN CARACAS RE NONINTERVENTION WOULD CAUSE THE OPPOSITION TO DEMAND LESS AND STOP LOOKING TO THE U.S. FOR OPEN INTERVENTION. HE ALSO SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THIS ALSO WOULD INEVITABLY MEAN THAT THE U.S. AMBASSADOR WOULD BE LESS MEDDLING IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS, AND INSTEAD THE FOCUS WOULD BE ON COLLABORATIVE RELATIONS. HE INSISTED THAT U.S.-NICARAGUAN RELATIONS HAD BEEN STRAINED BEFORE TO THE POINT THAT AN AMERICAN AMBASSADOR HAD ASKED HIS FATHER TO LEAVE NICARAGUA UPON WHICH HIS FATHER DARED THE USG TO "COME AND GET HIM", THEN OUST HIM.

9. AMB DREW ON HISTORY IN CUBA OF BATISTA OVERTHROW RESULTING FROM

LACK OF POPULAR SUPPORT FOR HIS 1952 COUP, TIREDNESS OF THE GUARD  
DEFENDING AN UPOPULAR AND ISOLATED LEADER AND FINALLY BATISTA'S  
DECISION TO IMPOSE A NEW PRESIDENT WHO WAS SEEN AS A PUPPET AND HAD  
NO POPULAR SUPPORT IN HIS OWN RIGHT. SOMOZA SAID HE WANTED THE  
LIBERAL PARTY TO ELECT THE NEXT PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE. HE SAID HE  
WOULD REACTIVATE AND PURGE THE PARTY TO MAKE IT STRONGER. HE SAID  
HE WANTED A CANDIDATE SELECTED WHO WOULD BE POPULAR, NOT JUST A  
FIGUREHEAD. AMB SAID HE THOUGH THAT WOULD BE GOOD.  
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## Message Attributes

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